



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

APCD Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements – Henry Heuser, LMTAC Co-chair

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, “Commission” or “LMTAC”) members were present: Henry Heuser (Co-Chair), Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Allen Steinbock (Secretary-Treasurer), Paul Cappiello, Shane Corbin, Todd Eberle, Cheri Bryant Hamilton, Robert Eberenz, Jr., Scott Hannah, Maria Koetter, Monica Orr, and Kenya Wade, as well as Ex-Officio commissioners Mesude Duyar, Sherie Long, Michelle King, and Mark White.

Commission Co-Chair Henry Heuser brought the meeting to order at 5:06pm and asked for Katy to introduce the new members and for a general round of introductions.

II. Introduction of New Members – Katy Schneider

Commission Co-Chair Katy Schneider introduced herself and began a round of introductions of the commissioners present. Katy then asked new Commissioner Kenya Wade to introduce herself. Kenya lives in Metro Council District 1 in the Cane Run neighborhood. Katy also welcomed Commissioner-to-be Amy Johnson to introduce herself. Katy said it was exciting that Amy was from Senate District 10.

III. Approval of Minutes – Katy Schneider

Katy asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting.

IV. Old Business

a. Update from Office of Sustainability – Maria Koetter, Director of Sustainability

Katy asked Maria Koetter, the Louisville Metro Sustainability Director, and Commissioner on behalf of the Louisville Metro Department of Economic Growth and Innovation, to update the Commission on tree-related activities of her office. Maria reported that the Office of Sustainability was convening an Urban Tree Canopy Assessment Proposal Committee to review responses to the recent request for proposals and would hope to make a recommendation in the near future. She also mentioned working with Louisville Metro Public Works & Assets to install better tree grates and tree wells downtown. Henry reiterated that the standard 4’ x 4’ tree wells were insufficient to grow a canopy tree.

b. Announcement of Urban Forester – Gina O’Brien, Executive Director of Brightside

Katy asked Gina O’Brien, Executive Director of Brightside, to update the Commission on the status of the recently-created Louisville Metro Urban Forestry Coordinator position. Gina reported that Erin Thompson would be the new Urban Forestry Coordinator and her first day on the job would be November 4th. Maria said that Erin would be at the upcoming press conference at 28th and Hale to update the public on the city’s tree-planting efforts. Gina welcomed all Commission members to attend the press conference. Gina explained that Erin has a degree in forestry, previously worked for LG&E, and was with the Olmsted Parks Conservancy before that. Henry asked where her office would be. Gina said she would be in Metro Hall with Brightside and the Office of Sustainability.

c. Other Announcements

Katy noted that a lot of people have inquired about donating to the Commission. To help facilitate donations, she acquired a stamp to use to provide pre-addressed envelopes to make it easy for people to send donations to the Commission via Brightside. Donations will be tax deductible.

Ex-officio Commissioner and Air Pollution Control District representative Michelle King reminded the Commission that members had received an email request from Audrey Cotten, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Economic Growth and Innovation, to sign and return to her the “Proof of Receipt” sent along with materials from the Kentucky Attorney General explaining open meetings/open records laws. Many Commissioners asked for that material to be resent. Michelle offered to communicate that request to Ms. Cotten.

d. Glenview Garden Club Grant – Ken Herndon, Director of Operations and Communications, Louisville Downtown Management District

Henry asked Ken Herndon, Director of Operations and Communications for the Louisville Downtown Management District (LDMD), to give a short presentation to the Commission on downtown trees, particularly related to the recent Glenview Garden Club grant. [Attachment A]

Ken explained that the LDMD had been around for 20 years. He said there were over 300 downtown tree wells that, for a variety of reasons, were empty or had dead trees. He said the LDMD had received a grant from MSD to plant trees in empty tree wells. Because the trees were all planted downtown, Ken explained, the LDMD was able to donate its hours to water the trees. He said the LDMD is in the process of receiving another MSD grant to plant trees outside of the LDMD zone. For trees planted outside LDMD jurisdiction, the LDMD received a donation from the Glenview Garden Club to cover the expenses of watering the trees. Henry asked if the trees were being planted in bigger tree wells. Ken said they were. Ken said they will have planted 332 trees in two or three years.

Ken also showed pictures of tree wells with “porous pave” rather than tree grates, which are expensive and can be impediments to tree growth. The porous pave, which is made of a rubbery material much like that used in school playgrounds, is much less expensive than the tree grates (\$200-\$300 vs. \$1500 respectively) and allows water to pass quickly through to the soil beneath. The porous pave can also be adjusted to make room for an expanding trunk; a frequent concern with metal grates.

Ken also showed a picture of a corner in a parking lot—a wasted space that cannot be used for parking but could be used for tree planting if the pavement was taken up. Henry asked what was stopping the city from doing this. Ken said the will and the money. Henry said they should contact Riverside Parking, the owner of the parking lot shown in Ken’s photo.

Ken also showed pictures of trees planted with city funds prior to the merger of the city and county governments. He said that funding was eliminated after merger, effectively halting major street tree plantings.

Ex-Officio Commissioner and Metro Parks Forester Mesude Duyar asked what the survival rate for the downtown tree planting has been. Ken said they'd lost only two trees in the first year. Mesude asked what the pruning schedule was; noting that for street trees structured, scheduled pruning is the most important thing. Street trees must be pruned every three years, she explained, in order to be healthy and long-lived. Ex-Officio Commissioner Mark White said they would begin pruning the trees in one year.

Henry congratulated Ken on writing and receiving the Glenview Garden Club grant. He called it a model for grant writing. Ken said it was the first time that the Glenview Garden Club had given a grant just for watering. Katy said one of the members of the Club had commended Mark White, calling him a joy to work with. Henry said the Club had also funded the "Egg Lawn" planting in The Parklands of Floyds Fork and would want to hear from the Commission again.

Henry asked where the grates go when they are taken up. Mark said they only fetched \$16 at the scrapyards, so most of them are warehoused. A member of the audience suggested that they could be sold to the public as ornaments. Henry asked who owned them to sell them. Several commissioners answered that the city owned them. Henry asked what the process was to sell them. No one knew for certain.

Henry thanked Ken for his presentation.

V. New business

a. Land Development Code, Chapter 10 Part 4 Recommended Revisions – Policy Committee

Katy, on behalf of the Commission's Policy Committee, updated the Commission on recent developments with the recommended revisions to the Louisville Metro Land Development Code (LDC). Katy called the revisions important. She said that ideally the city would have started with a tree ordinance first, but explained that the LDC revision process was already underway through the LDC Improvement Committee's Chapter 10 Subcommittee, causing the Commission to address the LDC language first.

Michelle recapped the Commission's previous recommendations, noting that the Policy Committee had discussed Chapter 10 Part 1 proposed revisions through a lengthy process. The Committee brought initial recommendations on Part 1 to the Commission and then returned with a revised set of Part 1 recommendations that accounted for feedback from discussion at the Chapter 10 Subcommittee meetings.

Michelle explained that the Policy Committee was now bringing recommended revisions to Chapter 10 Part 4 to the Commission and reviewed the major points in those recommendations. [Attachment B] Ex-Officio Commissioner and Louisville Metro Landscape Architect Sherie Long asked about language in section 10.4.4. that had been struck out but replaced with nothing. Michelle clarified that the Policy Committee recommended eliminating that language to allow for greater planting site discretion by Planning and Design staff.

Katy asked for a motion to approve the LDC 10.4 Recommended Revisions. Commissioner and Metro Council Member Cheri Bryant-Hamilton made the motion and Commissioner Todd Eberle seconded. The recommendations were approved by voice vote.

b. State Highways

Henry informed the group that he has invited Matt Bullock of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) District 5, the Louisville area, to speak to the group about policies and regulations concerning the proximity of trees to state highways. He explained that KYTC had removed many trees along Brownsboro Road, which was of concern the local Metro Councilperson. Henry read KYTC's policy governing landscaping along state highways from the KYTC Permits Manual (PE-701), which included:

"No plantings can be placed on the right-of-way closer than fifteen feet from the outside edge of pavement or between the outside edge of pavement and normal roadway ditch line."

Henry expressed concern that the regulation seemed overly broad and hoped to learn more about its application from a KYTC representative. Commissioner Todd Eberle said there was a section of Highway 42 where KYTC had planned to remove all trees when expanding the road. He explained that KYTC would either have to tear out trees or move utilities, depending on the side of the road where work occurred. Todd wondered whether the widening was really necessary in the first place. He said there were many alternatives to removing existing trees.

c. Bowman Field Update

Henry said trees at Bowman Field were scheduled to be trimmed. Projects & Maintenance Committee Co-Chair Mike Hayman added that the plans were still in the works, but that the Louisville Regional Airport Authority was definitely examining the possibility of trimming the trees around Bowman Field in order to comply with federal regulations.

d. Committee Reports

i. Projects & Maintenance Committee

Commissioner and Projects & Maintenance Committee Co-Chair Paul Cappiello suggested the Commission should meet with the state senator from Oldham County who was chair of the Transportation Committee in the State Senate.

Katy asked Mike to give a committee report and a tree tip.

Mike said that frequent parking under trees causes soil compaction that would, over time, damage a tree. Paul said that it can take soil 500 years to de-compact and return to its natural state. Katy mentioned that Metro Council members wanted to put tree tips like this in their Council Newsletters.

Mike updated the Commission on projects taken on since the last meeting. He had helped plant 33 trees at the Urban Government Center, 12 trees in Portland, and 10 trees in Parkland with 3 more on the way there as well as 40 coming soon to the Liberty Green area. The Liberty Green trees will go in the islands on Hancock and Clay Streets.

Mike said the next project would be planting street trees in the Shelby Park/Liberty Green area. Katy explained that trees planted with Louisville Metro funds had to be used for trees planted on public property and right-of-way. Henry asked who would be watering the Liberty Green trees. Mike said it would be the Metro Housing Authority. Sherie specified that the responsibility for maintenance would lie with the developer, CITY Properties, led by Bill Weyland.

Mike said that the Parkland neighborhood would be planted more slowly because many individual homeowners were involved. He added that Eco-Tech trees had been planted at the Reynolds property at 28th St. and Hale Ave., part of the 28th St. corridor where the Mayor's upcoming press

conference would be. Mike said he was in talks with Brandeis Elementary to be part of planting along 28th Street, which would have to be planted in phases.

Katy asked for a reminder of who Eco-Tech was. Mike explained that Eco-Tech was a waste management company that donated 100 trees a year to the city. Mike said there were three primary sources of tree planting funds – Louisville Metro, MSD, and Eco-Tech – that were being used to plant trees in various locations. However, Mike added that a donor wanted to plant 14 trees in the right-of-way in front of Metro United Way and another 11 trees along streets adjacent to the downtown Jefferson Community and Technical College campus. A member of the audience prompted Mike to discuss the trees he was working on planting with the city of Windy Hills. Mike explained that Windy Hills would be paying for the trees.

Henry asked how much of the city money had been spent. Mike said he was just getting started. Henry asked whether the money would all be spent in time. Mike said not at the current rate, but that he was hoping that Erin, the new urban forester, would be able to take on right-of-way planting with contracted watering—that's the fastest way to plant trees. Henry asked what money Mike could spend if he ran out of money and the Commission could raise more. Maria noted that the Commission first needed to fund the comprehensive Urban Tree Canopy Assessment.

Katy said Mike's Projects & Maintenance Committee could be Erin's working committee. Katy said some of the smaller cities, such as Shively, could chip in money for tree planting in their areas.

Commissioner-to-be Amy Johnson asked Mike if the city could plant trees along treeless roads, especially ones with TARC stops. Mike said they would have to do that in order to make a difference but the focus right now was on the easiest places to plant trees. Amy noted that many businesses lined these areas. Mike said the city would have to get them involved, but business owners often had trouble coming to terms with the true cost of a tree, plus watering.

VI. Audience questions

Henry asked if there were any questions from the audience. A guest from the Original Highlands Neighborhood Association asked if Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) cut down trees because it was easier to mow landscapes without trees. Mike said there had been problems with JCPS trees, but that there was a lot of variation from school to school and principal to principal. He advised the guest to ask Jim Fegenbush at JCPS.

Henry called on another guest who asked why the Pegasus Parade was run on Broadway. He suggested it could be run down Main Street and then trees could be planted down the middle of Broadway. He said Broadway was currently an expanse of asphalt but could be much more beautiful if the Pegasus Parade were moved.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m. The next meeting will be held on November 26, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District Boardroom.